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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the development of a library support system at California State University (CSU), Chico, which enables off-campus students who attend live television lectures transmitted from campus to have the same, or better, access to learning resources as on-campus students. Background information provided includes a description of the Instructional Television Fixed Service (ITFS) program, which transmits the lectures via a two-way audio and one-way video communications network. Discussion of the library extended support service, as it is evolving under the direction of a visiting librarian, focuses on three areas: (1) making all units of the university aware of library off-campus and on-campus services; (2) providing off-campus students with access tools or points, including not only printed and microform indexes, but also online bibliographic searching services and dial-up access to the library's computerized card catalog/circulation system; and (3) making materials available in the extended campus region, primarily through the interlibrary loan system. Cooperation with local libraries and the public library network in Northern California is stressed. (Author/ESR)

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Delivering Off-campus Library Services in Northern California

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To be presented October 14th, at the Off-Campus Library Services Conference, called by Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant (Michigan) at St. Louis, Missouri, October 14-15, 1982.

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Abstract

This paper will cover the development of a university library support system enabling off-campus students attending live televised lectures transmitted from campus to have the same, or better, access to learning resources as on campus students. These courses are upper-division or graduate level in a degree-granting program. The program as currently evolved is divided into three sections: (a) developing an awareness of library services; (b) providing off-campus students with access tools or points; and (c) making materials available in the extended campus region.

Delivering Off-campus Library Services in Northern California

The Chico campus of the California State University System was established in 1887 as a state normal school. In 1924 the California Legislature mandated the school to become a four-year college; in 1961, it became a part of the 19 individual campuses comprising the California State University and Colleges System. This is one of three separate systems of higher public education in California. The other two are the community colleges which offer the first two years of post-high school education and the University of California with extensive doctoral programs.

Chico is located in an agricultural town of 26,000. It is an hour-and-a-half drive north of the state capitol in Sacramento. The campus sits near the northern end of California's Central Valley surrounded by the Coastal Range, the snow-capped volcanic peaks of the Cascade Range and the rugged Sierra Nevadas. The climate is mild all year and the Sacramento River bottom soil is fertile. While large fruit and nut orchards, rice fields, sheep and dairy farms form an economic base for the community, residents of the town are culturally as well as economically aware of the University. Population figures do not include

all the 14,300 students who study at Chico.

The California State University system was designed to bring undergraduate and masters degree programs to citizens throughout the state. Chico's designated service area includes the half-million inhabitants of the 12 inland counties north to the Oregon border and east to Nevada--a 32,888 square mile region that comprises 21 percent of the state.

Though the service area of CSU, Chico encompasses most of the state north of Sacramento, the present reality is that the exceptionally attractive campus and climate primarily attract urbanites from the nearby San Francisco Bay Area and the Los Angeles Basin. Unlike most California public schools, CSU, Chico is not a commuter campus. Most of the students come from families which are fairly wealthy, but not wealthy enough to give up California's free higher public education to send their children to expensive private schools such as Stanford or the University of Southern California.

The library at CSU, Chico is not organized along traditional lines. The reference department is a self-governing unit within the University library structure. Thirteen professionals work in reference services. A decade ago, one of these positions was designated as a visiting librarian post.

Yearly, the reference department makes a proposal on some aspect of librarianship which they want investigated. If the administration approves their plan, it is advertised and a librarian is hired to execute the proposal. In the past, some of these visitors have organized collection development, integrated audio-visual materials or broadened bibliographic skills.

In 1979 the reference department wanted to examine ways of providing library services to off-campus students. Their impetus was the University's four-year-old, highly publicized Instructional Television Fixed Service program, or ITFS.

ITFS offered two-way audio and one-way video communication of live lectures at CSU, Chico and sites located throughout northern California. From 1975 to 1979 only upper-division or graduate level extension (self-support) courses were offered via ITFS. Effective with the Spring 1980 semester, a total University-wide effort was launched to offer regular, state-support courses via ITFS. If all admissions requirements were met, the ITFS student could register as a regular, state-support student and pay the state-support fees. For the student, this meant a considerable reduction in the costs of pursuing an education.

In 1979, prior to ITFS offering state-supported courses, there were nine sites with an enrollment of 120

students in seven courses. The next year under state-support, attendance nearly doubled. By 1981 there were 399 students taking 25 courses at 12 sites.

The popularity of ITFS reflects an electronic alternative to sending professors 220 miles north to Yreka, with stops along the way in Red Bluff, Anderson, Redding and Weed. Or, expecting students to drive similar distances to Chico.

With the introduction of ITFS, students in the classroom at Chico and students scattered over the 12 counties saw and heard the same lecture, at the same time. All students had the same opportunity to immediately question the professor. Everything was to be as equal as current technology would permit.

Consequently, the reference department formalized its intent to have the visiting librarian investigate and realize alternative methods of delivering library services to remote sites. For the first time, the visiting appointment was for a three-year period, rather than the usual one-year.

The department hoped their visitor would identify problems during the first year. In the second year contingent ways of delivering services were to be tried. At the end of the third and final year, a recommendation listing alternatives and their cost was to be presented.

The advertisement that appeared in Library Journal in February, 1980 was brief. It stated: "Chico is seeking a librarian who is knowledgeable and experienced in the development, organization, management and delivery of library services to students and faculty at extended campus learning sites throughout northeastern California."

I was hired to begin on September 1, 1980.

My background focused on developing library programs to serve sparsely populated rural areas. My previous experience included Head of Extension Services for Great Falls (Montana) Public Library, Deputy Director Monroe County (Michigan) Library System and Personnel Director/ Business Manager for the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. The last major position I held was as the Director of the Southcentral Federation of Libraries headquartered at the Billings (Montana) Public Library.

The job advertisement had been specific concerning my new responsibilities. But, as it turned out, everything was not almonds and olives. Everyone realized travel would be involved--in fact, necessary to cover this vast area; but no provisions had been made for a state car. After two months, the dean came up with $500 of travel money that I could use. Since then things have worked themselves out.

I subsequently attended classes at each of the nine

sites, talking with the students and watching the teachers via television. Over a period of time, I discovered I was the only University representative who visited the extension classrooms on a continuous basis.

Quiet time on the highways gave me sufficient opportunity to consider a number of solutions. I was hired to develop systems to deliver materials, yet I saw there were two steps necessary before getting to the point of making materials available, a Triple A program if you will: awareness, access and availability.

I would like to define each of the three parts in the program and then elaborate on how they work.

We need to make all the units of the University aware that the library can provide resources off campus as well as on campus. All the units includes administration, continuing education, faculty members, department chairs, students, student support services, librarians off campus, community college administrators, etc.

We are to provide specific tools and techniques for students to access materials that are assumed to be in the campus library. We are talking about printed indexes as well as computerized bibliographic services. This access also includes working with the local library systems to use their inter-library loan network.

We know it does not do any good to tell people that

libraries exist to provide information and research materials, then give patrons tools to access specific titles, authors or journals without making them available.

AWARENESS

Most students are unclear what resources an academic library has. Most faculty members think libraries have not changed since they used them for their graduate work. For our part, we college librarians have our own blind assumptions. We generally believe that students as well as faculty should know what a library is and what it can do--and they should. But most don't.

Before we could raise the awareness of the students, faculty and librarians, we needed to do some consciousness raising with administrative and support units on campus.

All off-campus education, including ITFS, is administered by our Office of Continuing Education. It was apparent to me that the library had to have a good working relationship with this administrative group. Consequently we began bi-weekly meetings, with prepared agendas. Participants in the meetings include the administrators of continuing education, a representative from the student affairs office, and personnel from the Instructional Media Center (IMC) who are responsible for the mechanical maintenance of the ITFS facilities.

The ever-present fourth factor in these meetings is a representative from the library. The librarian brings a unique perspective. This person is the only member of the assembled group who visits all the sites, meets most of the students and discusses the course requirements with the various professors.

Other people have been invited based upon the needs of the ITFS program. For instance, individuals connected with disabled students interested in signing for the deaf, have attended.

At these meetings we try to solve the various problems of the off-campus learner, the faculty member teaching via simultanous television transmission, as well as any administrative dilemmas. During the meetings, the librarian actively participates in the total planning and decision making. By being a part of this process, the library is able to influence both the content and the scope of the program offered.

Making faculty members aware of library resources is an integral part of our program. When a faculty member is assigned to teach an off-campus course, the library contacts the instructor to set up a time to discuss the course.

During this conference, a librarian asks a very basic

question: "What learning resources would you expect a student on campus to use to successfully complete your course?" The professor is free to describe these requirements without worrying about the off-campus student. The librarian's role is to insure the off-campus student will be able to meet them.

Professors' comments have ranged from the expected to the extreme. They have said, "My students do not need to use a library. Everything they will need will come from the textbook and my lectures." Professors have also said, "I am teaching the research methods course. My students will be writing the opening chapters of their thesis. They need library services."

In working with those who insist their courses are self-contained, we smile and say "Thank you." With the second type of professor we have an opportunity to explore some alternative ways of delivering library resources.

For instance, if the professor requires students to read current journal articles related to specific topic areas, we can create a bibliography using DIALOG or another vendor, then reproduce the information on microfiche and give the citations and abstracts to the students.

But that's getting ahead of ourselves. We have yet to talk about making students and their communities aware of library resources.

Isolated extension students do not have a working knowledge of an academic library. And why should they? Their library experience is based either on a small county library, a branch of a library system, or a local community college library. They might expect to find Time magazine in their community but certainly not Information Technology and Libraries.

It was through continuing visits to sites that we have been able to develop student awareness of library services. Some times this has not had a direct bearing on the class they were taking, but has effected their academic experience. I have worked with students finishing a paper for a course in which they had taken an incomplete; and I have worked with students in gathering materials to pass examinations which challenge courses.

We've talked about administration, faculty and students. There is one other component in the awareness factor, the local educational community. For CSU, Chico that includes the facilities where we hold classes: community colleges, high schools, the board rooms of county superintendent of schools, grade schools, cable television networks and training centers for both government agencies and private industry.

Some of the personnel who make all of this work includes librarians, superintendents of schools, janitors--

janitors because they open ITFS sites for students on weekends.

Additionally, we have made faculty and students aware of the local library's delivery network as a means of getting materials from CSU, Chico on inter-library loan. This may be the most unusual aspect of the CSU, Chico experience. We work very closely with the public library network to help our students obtain materials quickly. In return for their assistance, we treat their library patrons via inter-library loan as though they were our students. There is no difference in our level of inter-library loan service.

When someone asks a local library for a journal article which is at CSU, Chico, any person can expect to receive a copy of the article in a minimum number of days. We do not quibble over whether that request came from a Chico student or the local pharmicist. We can't ask local libraries to jump for our students if we won't give them the same service for their patrons.

ACCESS

Tools for access can be described as either print, microform, online or equipment.

The most common print access tools are the H.W. Wilson indexes. Because more than 50% of our off-campus students

are education majors, we have purchased additional copies of The Education Index. We have also placed other Wilson indexes at various sites to support other disciplines.

Remember, we are looking for tools which will give the student a citation--something to request through a library. Another possibility would include Subject Guide to Books in Print and other titles in that series. CSU, Chico has collection development policy statements for the various disciplines as well as librarians with subject specialities. It should not take long for individuals with that knowledge to teach upper-division, graduate level students how to use the Subject Guide to Books in Print as a print catalog.

CSU, Chico has all of its serial holdings on a set of five microfiche. Every off-campus student has available a copy of the listing. Numerous bibliographies have been prepared, reproduced on microfiche and given to the students. Out-of-print, as well as non-copyrightable materials have been duplicated on microfiche.

The most exciting part of developing access to materials, however, has been the use of online data services. CSU, Chico subscribes to both DIALOG and BRS. Our most successful off-campus tool has been the use of various data bases, especially ERIC. For all computer searches, the library has a program of subsidization.

The first ten dollars is paid by the library; the second $10 is paid by the patron (student or faculty member); and the third $10 is paid by the library. All additional costs are paid by the patron.

Searching on ERIC through BRS means the majority of searches cost less than $10. Consequently, I heavily promote the use of computerized searches. I have encouraged off-campus students to use print indexes to define their topic. Once the available indexes have been used, the students can direct-dial the reference desk and request an online search.

We have installed telephones with Radio Shack automatic dialers at various sites. With the push of a single button, the student is in touch with one of 12 specific on-campus extension telephones. Two of the buttons ring the University library. Any time the site is open, the student can call either the Reference Desk or the Extension Librarian.

We have told the students, "Push, 'Reference' when you need help in defining your problem or want to know where to look next. Push 'Extension' when you want a particular article or book and the normal delivery system won't give it to you fast enough."

The ultimate in technological access begins later this fall. One test site at a community college will have access to our computerized catalog/circulation

system. CSU, Chico has touch terminals as well as keyboard terminal access to its card catalog. The system we are using is CLSI's LIBS 100 circulation system with the public access catalog module.

Off-campus students will have dial-up, keyboard access to our catalog. They can search by author, title, subject or call number for any item. Users can also do an abbreviated BOOLEAN search combining any two designated categories. The student will know whether a specific item is checked out, on reserve, in the reference collection or on the shelf. Thus, the student will immediately see what we own and be able to weigh the odds of obtaining the material through the local library.

AVAILABILITY

From the Oregon border to the middle of the San Joaquin Valley, libraries are connected by delivery vans which daily exchange materials between cooperating institutions. We have taken advantage of this existing system to deliver books, xerox copies of articles, microfiche, audio-visual kits and computer texts.

In an isolated, rural area like northern California, the public or community college libraries are the only local facilities immediately available to off-campus students. I believe the librarians in these libraries

can be invaluable in providing a personalized reference service for the off-campus student. I actively promote the use of local libraries.

While a few of the out-lying librarians were sophisticated about the technological changes that have swept our profession, most, quite frankly, were not. Although they had never experienced an online search, they were as excited to discover how simple and quick computers can be as any of us were the first time.

We have put on one-day workshops for local librarians on how to use various specialized resources, such as law materials. Although these libraries do not have individual subscriptions to DIALOG, SDC or BRS, they have participated in designing search arguments as well as interpreting the results. For each local library which participates in an online search for an off-campus student, we have given them free searches on the subjects of their choice.

In setting up this cooperative system, we could have created a separate office to fill off campus requests. That is still possible. However, every academic library has an inter-library loan department and Chico is no exception. I believe that inter-library loan offices are established to locate and fill requests for materials which are not available locally. From my point of view, locally includes, Anderson, Redding, Chico, etc. That

is, any site or campus where CSU, Chico has students.

For our purposes, then the inter-library loan department acts as the unit which coordinates the delivery and return of library materials. Whether it's a journal article, a book or a microfiche copy of an ERIC document; everything is handled by the staff of inter-library loan.

SUMMARY

What we have been talking about this afternoon may seem unusual to some of you. As librarians, we understand an individual's need for information. What we must do is to make everyone aware of libraries. Next we have to assure our potential patrons that libraries, library resources, and librarians are accessible. Then, ultimately, we must build the networks to provide fast, reliable delivery of materials when they are identified and needed by our library patrons.